

## **Local Japanese History in a Global Context**

(14th December 2018)

Edited by  
**John PORTER** (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

### **1. The Introduction of Sericulture and the Transformation of Village Society: The Case of Oaso Village's Arable Riverside Land**

Talk by Yusaku MATSUKAWA  
(Keio University)

Focusing Musashi Province's Oaso Village (Present-day Kumagai-shi, Saitama Prefecture), this presentation examined the involvement of villagers in the management of the Village's arable riverside land. With the introduction of sericulture into Japan during the late-Tokugawa period, arable riverside land outside of the protection of dykes was put to use growing mulberry. This transformed the way that villagers had previously engaged with arable floodplain land and their relationship with the extra-village outcast status organizations that were called upon to monitor such land. This presentation considered both changes by analyzes an agreement composed by the residents of Oaso Village

### **2. Syphilis and Local Society in Meiji Japan: An Examination of Medical Examination Records**

Talk by Waka HIROKAWA  
(Senshu University)

In modern Japanese historiography, the history of syphilis has been examined only in terms of its relationship with the nation's prostitution system. However, during the Meiji period, syphilis was a widespread affliction and was by no means a disease that only affected prostitutes and their customers. For example, the psychological difficulties brought on by syphilis' intensification were referred to as "intensification numbing" and for generations represented one of Japan's major psychoses. Focusing on the Meiji-era history of Tochigi Prefecture's Kitsuregawa region, this examined the local history of syphilis using medical examination records from Kitsuregawa Hospital, a facility that performed syphilis examinations and was a major purveyor of local healthcare.

### **3. Cattle Plague, Livestock Disposal, and the Dismantling of the Early Modern Status System**

Talk by John PORTER  
(Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

Utilizing records from the Tokyo Metropolitan Archives, this presentation analyzed the history of livestock disposal during the early Meiji period. In the sixth month of Meiji 4, cattle plague was raging along Siberian Coast. In an effort to prevent a domestic outbreak, the authorities ordered the prefecture-wide incineration of dead livestock. In addition, members of Tokyo's outcast association were enlisted to carry out the incineration order. This presentation examined the historical backdrop against which this order was issued and the process whereby it was implemented. Thereby, it clarified the network of social relationships that supported the order's rapid implementation.